



# Easy Rider

## Loudoun County Office of Transportation Services Transit Newsletter October 2005



### “Bike On Buses” Registration

The County now has a new registration procedure for passengers wishing to place bicycles in the luggage bays of the commuter buses. We are all aware of heightened security in this region as well as the whole country relative to potential threats. The County with support from Connex has chosen to create this procedure to help alleviate some passenger uncertainty with luggage compartment doors being opened. This new registration procedure will provide a “Bike on Bus” ID card for every rider who places a bicycle on the commuter buses. This ID card will be issued to riders once the registration form has been completed and returned to the County. The rider will display the ID card to the driver every

**Bike On Bus Identification Card #1**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

AM Boarding Location: \_\_\_\_\_

PM Boarding Location: \_\_\_\_\_

time they put their bike on the bus. Bicycles can be placed on the buses at the following locations:  
**Morning** — all stops in Loudoun County and West Falls Church — with removal at Rosslyn, the Pentagon, State Dept., 14th & F, Independence & 6th, and Convention Center; **Afternoon** — Convention Center, Independence & 12th, I & Connecticut, Pentagon, Rosslyn, and West Falls Church. Go to [www.loudoun.gov/bus](http://www.loudoun.gov/bus) and download the form, complete it, then send it to [rideshare@loudoun.gov](mailto:rideshare@loudoun.gov).

Cell Phones: When using cell phones, please be courteous by using a silent mode or low volume ring and please keep your calls brief. Speak quietly when conversing with other passengers or when using a cell phone. This is the number one complaint that the County receives from riders.

Headphones are required for portable music and gaming devices.

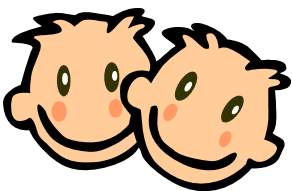
Bus Seats: Seats are for passengers, not belongings. Please do not store belongings on the seat next to you, store them in the overhead bins. Also be mindful when reclining your seat that someone may be sitting behind you and would not appreciate a fully reclined seat in their lap. When departing the bus try to remember to put your seat in the upright position so those behind you can get out of their seats easier.

Arrival and Departure Times: The posted times on the schedules were determined based on a number of bus timings that took place during peak morning and afternoon traffic conditions.

These scheduled arrivals and departures times may be delayed by unusual or unexpected traffic conditions. Once the door closes and the bus begins departing each stop, the bus will not open the door for late arriving passengers. We recommend being at the stop a few minutes early. Particularly in the District, because the bus cannot stage or wait along the curbs/sidewalks along the streets in Washington and may run a bit early if the passenger load or traffic is light.



Tickets: Please have your tickets and/or money (check/metrochek) ready when you board the bus. This will speed up the loading of passengers if the meister or driver is collecting as riders board the bus.



### New Faces Same Old Rules

Since late summer and the rise in gasoline prices, many new residents are riding LC Tran-

sit. Those of you who have been riding for a while are probably familiar with the passenger courtesies posted on the bus and in our New Rider Guide. For you newbie's here's the scoop.

**Luggage:** If you choose to carry on backpacks or duffle bags, etc., please be aware that these objects must either fit in the overhead compartments, on the floor by your feet or on your lap. Luggage, bags, backpacks, etc. will not be allowed in the aisles, up front by the driver or in the luggage compartments below the bus.

**Lost and Found:** Lost and found personal items left on a bus will remain on the same bus for 24 hours, and then the item will be turned over to County staff. Staff will hold the item for 30 days then donate it to Goodwill or the Salvation Army. Passengers may call or email the County to check on the status of a lost item.

**Bus Temperature:** The buses are equipped with two heating/air conditioning systems, one for the front and one for the back. Please let your driver know if you are experiencing extreme cold or hot conditions in your part of the bus. He/she may not be aware if there is an issue with the temperature in the rear of the bus. But remember every individual interprets being hot and cold differently, so we recommend carrying a sweater or jacket if you have a tendency to be bothered by cold temperatures on buses.



## Do you “Buzz or Alert”?

LC Transit has two forms of message notification for its passengers: **Bus Biz** and **LC Alert**. **Bus Biz** is an email notification system used to send



information to the riders relative to the service. These may range from surveys for ridership on holidays to changes in parking at a particular park and ride lot. **LC Alert** is a real-time

text-messaging system that is used when service is being disrupted by more than 10 minutes based on road closures, diversions, major delays in traffic, etc. To sign up for Bus Biz send an email to [rideshare@loudoun.gov](mailto:rideshare@loudoun.gov). To register for LC Alert go to the website at [www.loudoun.gov/bus](http://www.loudoun.gov/bus) and complete the LC Alert form. With recent schedule changes and movements in park and ride lots it is very important to be informed. So sign up today.

## Wide Load Coming Through

Not really, but I thought the headline was cute. If you want to check the load status of the buses that go from Loudoun to Washington, DC or Cascades/Lowes Island to West Falls Church, passenger loads for each run are posted on the website daily. These passenger totals will show which runs have standee issues and may help you find a bus that is less crowded and with available seating. So, if you have flexibility in your arrival and departure time and want to avoid a standing situation, then check the website for load factors (full loads, not wide loads) [www.loudoun.gov/bus](http://www.loudoun.gov/bus).



## Some Cheese with that Whine?

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the commuter bus service, (i.e., parking lots, late buses, overcrowding, change in schedules), direct your comments and suggestions to County staff. The County is ultimately responsible for all aspects of this service. Please do not argue with the drivers or busmeisters on the bus about such concerns. The driver does not make decisions about the service, he/she just does a great job driving the bus and keeping you safe as you travel up and down the highway. The role of the busmeister is to sell and collect tickets, make general announcements and distribute materials to the riders. The County

would like you to send your comments and suggestions to them via email at [rideshare@loudoun.gov](mailto:rideshare@loudoun.gov) or via the telephone at 1-877-465-2287 (1-877-GO-LCBUS). But remember, this is public transportation and not your personal limousine to work. Stop and think about the benefits of riding the bus, compared to driving your own car, sitting in traffic, wasting gasoline and having to stay awake to get to and from work.



## Park and Ride Lot Updates

The following is to provide our passengers with the progress of existing and future park and ride lots in Loudoun.

**Hamilton:** Discussions have been taking place with the Hamilton Volunteer Fire and Rescue (HVFD) Board and the Abundant Life Church to use existing parking at the HVFD social hall building for commuter parking. The HVFD is amenable to the joint use and the church is willing to create an easement to access the spaces. Staff from the Department of Building and Development is determining the type of land use applications that are required for this use. Once that determination is made, OTS staff will pursue seeking approval through the proper commissions and/or boards.

**Leesburg:** The current lot at 110 Catoctin Circle (Barber and Ross) is slated to be a commuter parking lot for a minimum of twelve months. The County has submitted a special exception application for a permanent 700-space park and ride lot at the Phil A. Bolen Memorial Park site on Sycolin Road. The parcel is a remnant of land not used for the park activities. On October 17, 2005, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the proposed park and ride lot special exception. This public hearing will take place at 6:00 PM in the Board of Supervisors' meeting room.

**Broad Run Farms:** The Galilee Methodist Church on Winding Road is a temporary lot that has been secured until the 100-space proffer from Lerner Corporation is completed. The Lerner park and ride lot is being built on the Dulles Town Center property and is anticipated to be completed within a year.

**Cascades:** The County is having discussions with the new Catholic Church (Our Lady of Hope) that is being built at the intersection of Cascades Parkway and Algonkian Boulevard regarding the use of parking spaces at the church for commuter parking. The church is currently reviewing the lease agreement.

## Fareboxes

Fareboxes are Coming!! Fareboxes are Coming!! The County anticipates that by the end of March 2006 fareboxes will be installed on LC Transit buses. These fareboxes will only take two forms of payment: cash and SmarTrip® cards. SmarTrip cards are plastic, rechargeable fare cards. Many of you have these now and are using them to board Metrorail. These same cards will be used to board LC Transit buses.

To pay your fare with the SmarTrip card on the LC Transit bus, you just have to tap the card on the target located on the farebox and the fare is automatically deducted.

It is important to register your SmarTrip card so that if it is ever lost or stolen, your registered SmarTrip card can easily be replaced along with the remaining dollar amount. Find out more at [MySmarTrip.com](http://MySmarTrip.com). For those who receive Metrocheks, you will need to work with your employer to convert your Metrocheks to SmarTrip Benefits. This program loads your metrochek value directly to your SmarTrip card. Sometime in



the future WMATA intends to do away with the current Metrochek system and transition to Smart Benefits. But no one knows how far down the road that is.

The County will notify riders once an official farebox installation date is determined. It is recommended that riders not purchase a large number of ticket books all at once. Once the County notifies riders that the switch to fareboxes will take place, a cutoff date for using tickets will be established. Staff hopes to give at least 30 days notice or more to riders regarding the change to fareboxes.

## **County to Purchase New Buses**

The Commonwealth of Virginia has awarded Loudoun County a State Capital Grant to purchase seven new commuter coaches. This grant funds approximately 68 percent of the anticipated purchase price. The remainder of the cost will come from lease purchase financing and fare revenues.

These buses are anticipated to be put in service at the beginning of FY07 (July 2006). The County intends to use these buses to serve the Dulles South area of the County. What that means is that buses will start picking up passengers at the new 250 space park and ride lot at Stone Ridge and maybe somewhere in South Riding and transport them to the District via Dulles North. Passengers can expect a major revision to the schedule that staff promises will have minimal impact to existing schedules.

## **Payable to the County of Loudoun**

One method of payment for LC Transit bus tickets is a personal check. From time to time the County is notified that a personal check has been returned for a variety of reasons: insufficient funds, account closed, etc. When a check is returned to the County, the rider's name on the check is placed on a Bad Check List that the busmeisters review when passengers give them a check to buy tickets. The person who wrote

the returned check will be sent a letter from the County's Treasurers' Office alerting them that their check was returned and that they are required to submit payment for the returned check along with a handling fee of \$35.

OTS staff is notified by the Treasurer's Office when no restitution is made to the County for these returned checks. So if you choose to pay by check, please be aware that the busmeisters review the "Bad Check" list every time they receive personal checks for payments of ticket books and if your name is on the "Bad Check" list you will not be allowed to use a personal check to buy tickets until financial affairs with the Treasurer's Office are rectified.



## **Bye, Bye Jodi**

The Busmeister program has lost one of the best to ever do the job. Jodi Reedy, Supermeister in the west, and her family (husband Jeff and two children) have moved to Sanford, Florida. Jodi began riding the bus in 1996 and became a meister that same year. In 1999 she became the Supermeister for the western part of the County. She would conduct the monthly busmeister meetings, distribute paperwork to the meisters as needed and substitute for meisters on vacation/out sick, etc. She has worked with Folger, Nolan (financial brokers) for 19 years and will be taking some much needed time off from the workforce before starting a new employment opportunity. County OTS staff would like to thank Jodi for all her hard work over the many years and wish her well in her new adventures.